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ABSTRACT

Participation of Romanian youth in the modernization of rural patterns should be viewed in terms of the Romanian village and its economic, socio-cultural, and demographic characteristics. While agricultural technology has improved the quality of life in the Romanian village, the schooling network has been structured according to urban models and the professional aspirations of village youth have been geared to urban pursuits thereby depriving the villages of their human potential. The program for modernizing rural patterns assumes youth settlement in the villages, as this would provide for demographic balance and the initiative of a young labor force in both agricultural and non-agricultural rural jobs. Transformation of agricultural work into a variant of industrial work and the normalization of rural-urban values constitute the fundamentals of the modernized rural patterns necessary to avert rural to urban migration among the young. Employing favorable propaganda, rural modernization should encompass: gradual implementation of industry; agrarian-industrial high schools which incorporate area-specific curricula; encouragement of both farm and worker activities; development of the village as a social community capable of embracing industrialization and preserving traditional values; and application of economic benefits toward better rural housing, cultural institutions, and social services. (JC)

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YOUTH AND THE MODERNIZATION OF RURAL PATTERNS

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The participation of youth in the modernization of rural patterns should be looked upon in close connection with the elements that define today's Romanian village from the economical, socio-cultural and demographic viewpoints.

Thanks to the scientific policy pursued by the Romanian Communist Party, in socialist Romania agriculture has assumed a constant and powerful development and modernization and, consequently, the agricultural output has grown steadily, whence the rural population has benefitted by higher living standards. The socialist transformation of agriculture favoured an ascendant dynamics of agriculture production; today, only 2.9 per cent of the global production comes from the private landed proprietors.

Concurrently, the mechanization of farming jobs and the ever higher labour productivity obtained, have created prerequisites for the release of a goodly part of labour force engaged in agriculture. This trend complies with the provisions under the Programme of the Romanian Communist Party for the construction of a multilaterally developed socialist society and Romania's advancement towards communism as the latter stipulates for 12 - 15 per cent only of the population to work in agriculture in 1990. In the meantime, the Party documents show that there are still some differences between village and town, between the quality of life in these two types of community.

At present 38 per cent of the country's active population works in the primary economic sector as against 65 per cent in 1960, consequent upon, a growing number of people's being engaged in industry and in the performance of services. Year by year more than 100,000 people supplement the ranks of the working class; the figure stands for a marked socio-professional mobility with emphasis on the groups of young people. The relatively high professional and specialization level characteristic of the young labour force as compared to the rest of the active rural population has favoured the youth's migration towards the industrialized towns where there are great and safe income opportunities and possibilities for higher living standards. On the other hand, undoubtedly, the younger generation has proved to be more receptive to the mutations registered in the spiritual and axiological outlines of the rural population.

Owing to a schooling network structured according to urban models, the professional aspirations of the village youth have been especialy geared to urban crafts and pursuits. To leave the village has become equal to social success, particularly in some more isolated areas.

Consequent upon this massive departure from the village, especialy of the young men, certain rural areas witnessed a demographic ageing and the employment of more and more women in agriculture. Some changes in the population's demographic behaviour have also been consequent upon this excessive migration of the youth, the birth rate recording significant decreases. A number of villages have thus been deprived of important productive and human potentials, the latter with multiple creative

resources. That is why, above all, the modernization of rural patterns assumes the youth's settlement in the villages, which will be conducive to:

- the provision of a demographic balance by age and sex in the rural area;
- the participation of young labour forces in the agricultural and non-agricultural jobs in the rural area;
- the capitalization of the youth's initiative ensuring a more dynamic evolution of the socio-political and cultural life of the village.

In order to find the most sure and favourable modalities for maintenance the youth in rural area, we must first know the causes of youth' migration from the village to the town.

The theories about migration as well as the sociological surveys show a complexity of structural elements wich constitutes the motivational support of the propensity to migrate. Many authors have agreed that the main role in etiology of migration is held by the economic factor. The other factors (social, cultural, psychological) tend to became important, influencing along with and in combination with the main factor - the economic one - the action of leaving the village.

In the framework of the preocupations for rural sociology, which have a steady tradition in our country, the Research Centre for Youth Problems carries out a number of investigations about the causes of youth' migration to town:

Economic factors;

a/ the economic attraction exercised by the urban area: increased economic opportunities offered by the urban environment, the option for a better remuneration of labour, a regular work timetable throughout the year, a better organized social security system;

b/ the economic defficiencies and dissatisfactions still existing in the rural area.

Socio-cultural factors:

a/ social promotion possibilities below those in the urban area;

b/ increased schooling facilities in the urban area;

c/ the gap existing between the living standards in the rural and urban areas;

d/ still insufficient cultural conditions and endowments in the villages, as well as limited spare time opportunities;

e/ the numerous socio-cultural opportunities and facilities offered by the urban area.

Psychological factors:

a/ the orientation of the youth's aspirations towards the urban condition; the existence of favourable opinion trends towards the town;

b/ the people's becoming conscious of the elements of social prestige offered by a non-agricultural job in the town.

The following elements should be taken into account of when examining the causes of migration:

1. under the conditions of a favourable opinion trend toward the town and the urban condition, the decision making for migration is, in many cases, the reflex of a feeling of belonging to certain groups, batches of graduates, or generations biased to migration (imitation).

2. in our epoch, among others, the rural community is characterized by a certain and irreversible change in the normative traditional factors, which, by the norms, customs and creeds of the groups of origin did not tolerate migration, and in general, were not receptive to transformations. Today's village youth is alien to the spirit of reclusion within the limits of one's birthplace and the environmental change is tolerated and often recommended by the family, which formerly was a factor that retained the youth in the village.

3. sometimes, migration should be linked to the natural wish of the youth for emancipation, with their tendency of liberating themselves from the rigorous norms of the social control in the rural community.

In compliance with the provisions under the Programme of the Romanian Communist Party for the construction of the multilaterally developed socialist society and Romania's advancement towards communism, in the following stage the levelling out of the development levels so as to bring the village closer to the town, and the transformation of the agricultural work into a variant of the industrial one, will be fundamental conditions for a balanced youth migration and for the settlement of the younger population in the rural area. In parallel to the development of the counties logging behind from the economic viewpoint, migration is to reduce its territorial

area to the effect that the ratio between the inter-county and intra-county displacements will be modified in favour of the latter. As a result, the social cost of migration will go down sensibly, mitigating a number of negative social and demographic effects bearing on the stability of the family, the demographic behaviour of the migrants, the educational function of the family, etc.

In the following decade, the young migrants may be attracted by the newly developed rural centres (accordind to the territorial planning), which although will not become towns will boast sufficient economic opportunities. This trend should be preceded by a corresponding propaganda in favour of these areas making known the prospects offered by settling in the respective centres.

It is also likely, that the future years will see part of the emigrants returning to their places of origin, determined either by increased job opportunities in the respective areas or by failure of adjustement to the recipient areas. These young people should be offered every condition enabling them to really become socially and economically functional in the rural commurity.

Last but not least, one should take into consideration the eventual reverse migration - from town to village - already emphasized in our previous studies. Under the circumstances, a number of facilities are to be offered for the priority settlement in the rural area of the youth coming from towns.

Research work, direct observation, discussions conducted with the youth, with the representatives of the local decision making bodies have offered a number of hypotheses (which have to be verified). Here is a selective erumeration of them:

- is the rural condition "per se" an element of absolute rejection? It seems it is not, particularly if we take into consideration the higher and higher civilization level acquired by the socialist village, an element which somehow accounts for the counter migrating movement (from town to village) although the latter is still incipient and insufficiently relevant.

- do the young people leave their village because they don't like it or because they primarily dislike their position in the rural community where [redacted] youth's initiative is not used sufficiently?

- do [redacted] youth leave the village because of the lack of prestige of agricultural jobs or because of the inadequate material background of work in the rural area? Is there any connection between the under[redacted]estimation of the profession of farmer and the real conditions in which it takes place?

- do not young people leave their village also because they have no clear image of the latter's future development and of the village's economic prospects?

- which is the relation between [redacted] youth's migration to town and the rate, quality and adherence to the social changes occuring in the rural area?

[redacted] Youth's settlement in the village is first and foremost a problem of the optimization of the economic activities in the rural area - agricultural (the acceleration of the rate of technical endowment of farming; more sensible growth of the autonomy of turning to account agricultural produce; increased incentives for agricultural units; a higher efficiency of some agricultural production cooperatives, a better

professional standing for farming jobs; the improvement of the legal framework of agricultural units; an increase in the remuneration of cooperative farmers; the granting of incentives to the youth staying to work in agriculture for a longer period of time; material support granted for the schooling of the youth who after gratuating will work in the agriculture production cooperatives) or non-agricultural (the location of industrial units in the rural area which are to process food, to turn agricultural vegetable and animal products into foods; the creation of permanent sections or auxiliary units of the urban industrial enterprises, the appropriate training of the youth).

These are some of the dynamic economic elements which will ensure the promotion of the rural localities at the levels of development and civilization of the towns.

Of course, the process of rural industrialization should be adapted to the conditions, particularities and claims of rural life. The location of new economic units should go hand in hand with the fresh impulse to be given to the old units, with the modernization and mechanization of farming and the creation of a diversified system of services. As a matter of fact, it should be underlined that a correct strategy should see to judiciously blend rural industrialization and agricultural development. Therefore, there will be developed an integrated policy that should lay emphasis on the complementary character of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, which should make an effectively harmonious and all-round whole in the rural area.

The development of rural communities under the condi-

tions of industrialization cannot be a simple extension of the traditional style of life and social relations; neither should it be a mechanical transplant of what industry and civilization has brought about in the urban area. The latter should be an original synthesis of both rural and urban activities, a blend of advantages offered by both the village and the town.

In order to avoid a number of negative consequences in the rural area which are visible in the urban area, it is necesary:

- to ensure a best industrialization rate, a gradual implanting of industries;

- to previously train the labour force, the relevant personnel so that the village should not be dependant on the town from this point of view either (agrarian-industrial high schools should be located in each area; curricula should be adjusted to the specific features of the respective areas, etc.)

- to accept and even encourage double activities (of farmer and worker) for part of the rural population;

- to develop the village as a social community apt to face and adjust to industrialization (the preservation and development of traditional values, as well as the maintenance of a certain quality of the human relationship, etc.);

- to use a sufficient part of the economic benefits obtained though industrialization in order to better housing, and social and cultural services in the rural area.

This is the economic background required by the settlement of the youth in the countryside; concurrently, a number of social measures are to be taken, educational activi-

ties and cultural actions to be developed. From among the social measures we will mention the diversification of socio-cultural and technical endowments, the construction of dwellings for the young rural families, the improvement of the supply to the population, of the transport service, etc.

As to the educational activities above all, they should develop among the youth a realistic outlook on succes and failure in life, making known, for the purpose, models of social success achievable in the rural area. To train the youth for work and life means to train them for an adequate profession in keeping into account the prospective parameters in their places of origin.

It is not less necessary to diversify the forms and modalities of cultural activities; the latter implies changes in the pattern of rural cultural institutions as well as in the content of cultural activities and the message transmitted to the youth.

The Union of Communist Youth, the revolutionary organization of the Romanian younger generation, bring an active contribution to the cultivation among the youth of the feeling of allegiance to the origin community, to their attraction to the process of modernization of rural patterns as provided by the Programme for the construction of a multilateraly developed socialist society and Romania's advancement towards communism. Turning to account the advantages accuring from the new organizational pattern of the Union of Communist Youth in the villages, which ensures the concentration of the majority of young people, regardless of their basic preoccupations, on the central economic unit in the village, the bodies and orga-

nizations of the Union of Communist Youth carry out steady communist educational activities, developing the youth's love for their native village, arresting their interest in the future growth of the rural area. The local plans of territorial systematization, the prospects offered by their implementation to the village and its inhabitants, are largely made known. The organizations of the Union of Communist Youth militate for the direct implication of the rural youth in the territorial systematization activities (advice, participation, priorities, facilities). Starting from the truth that tomorrow's village will belong to today's youth, one searches for effective formula that should express the rural community youth's interest and opinion.

The values of the rural civilization are consistently promoted among the youth; the idea among the youth, of settlement and stability gains ground; farther connections are identified and facilitated among the youth and the community of origin. Moreover, new rural values are introduced, compatible to the concepts of development and modernization and apt to develop youth's faithfulness to the village. The Union of Communist Youth is also concerned with bringing closer to one another the various categories of village youth (peasants, workers, intellectuals), a prerequisite of the social homogeneous evolution of the rural area. In this way, the youth are direct participants in one and all activities aiming at economically consolidating the villages; they make a great contribution to the development Programme worked out by the Romanian Communist Party.

By judiciously locating some industrial units in the

countryside, by speedily developing a modern and intensive agriculture, by judiciously carrying out the local and territorial systematization and equipping with the social, cultural and technical endowments and the construction of dwellings, all the conditions will be created for the youth to settle down in the villages, and fully participate in the process of modernization of rural patterns.

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